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Letter dated 16 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of New Zealand, the Security Council is scheduled to hold, on 22 September 2016, a briefing on the terrorist threat to civil aviation, in connection with the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".

To help to steer the discussion on the subject, a concept note has been prepared (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gerard **van Bohemen**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council briefing on the terrorist threat to civil aviation, to be held on 22 September 2016

Summary

On 22 September, the President of the Security Council will convene a meeting, at the level of ministers for foreign affairs, on the terrorist threat to civil aviation. The intention is for the Council to adopt a resolution to address this evolving threat, emphasizing the need for States to take measures both collectively, through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and individually, to promote the effective implementation of aviation security measures. The Secretary-General of ICAO will brief the Council.

Terrorist threat to civil aviation

Civil aviation remains an iconic target for terrorist groups. Several attacks in the past year alone show that the world is facing an urgent and growing threat. Terrorist groups are likely to continue to target civil aviation globally and attempt to exploit any security weaknesses at airports. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida have repeatedly stated their intention and demonstrated their capability to do so. This brings into sharp focus the importance of having effective security arrangements in place at airports to counter the threat.

Action to address the threat to civil aviation

The international community's response must evolve to keep pace with the changing nature of the threat. States need to have effective measures in place to detect and deter terrorist attacks against aviation and to ensure that these measures are implemented on a sustainable basis.

ICAO is the global body responsible for developing and monitoring international aviation security standards: its work should be supported and its member States are urged to work through it to ensure that international standards keep pace with the threat.

The provision of capacity-building and technical assistance is also needed to enable all States to implement aviation security measures effectively.

Given the vital importance of international civil aviation to economic development, trade and political and cultural links between States, the threat to civil aviation is by its nature a global issue. Attacks against civil aviation not only endanger the lives of those on board or on the ground but also undermine the confidence of people all over the world in the security of international civil aviation.

Action is needed by States not only at the national level but also at the regional and international levels, including through ICAO. A high-level meeting of the Security Council will send a strong message to the international community and help to galvanize activity to address the threat posed by terrorist targeting of civil aviation.

The Security Council has already focused on other evolving aspects of counter-terrorism activities, from the financing of terrorism to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, as well as links between terrorist groups and organized crime. In keeping with this approach, a Council resolution on terrorism and aviation security would raise awareness of the threat to civil aviation, help to reinforce the existing international framework of aviation security standards and encourage the implementation of effective measures to address the threat.

The proposed resolution (under negotiation) is intended to recognize the terrorist threat to global civil aviation as a threat to international peace and security and to call upon all States to implement effective measures to mitigate the threat and to urge them to work within ICAO to support the effective implementation of international standards. It also encourages adherence to international standards, international partnerships and collaboration, and good security practices. It is a counter-terrorism-focused resolution, in line with the standards set out in annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

To frame the discussion, the Secretary-General of ICAO, Fang Liu, will give a briefing. In their statements Security Council members may wish to address the following points:

(a) The evolving terrorist threat to civil aviation and the specific challenges that this presents;

(b) How to bolster international collaboration to address the challenges, in particular under the auspices of ICAO;

(c) How to improve and strengthen compliance with international aviation security standards;

(d) What States can do to increase their capacity to provide effective aviation security on the ground;

(e) Areas in which States may have special capacity to assist others to provide assistance to tackle the threat.